



United States Department of the Interior

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Office of the Director

Reston, Virginia 20192

John Wesley Powell Award

John Galetzka

TLALOCnet Project Manager

UNAVCO

John Galetzka is recognized for his sustained and extraordinary contributions to the objectives and mission of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). As an unwavering advocate of earthquake preparedness, Mr. Galetzka has travelled the world seeking to train, build capacity, and conduct relief missions in areas susceptible to earthquake hazards. In doing so, he served as an unofficial 'ambassador' of good will, representing our country in the best possible way as he worked overseas to help make the world safer from earthquakes. Mr. Galetzka's enthusiasm, talent, and willingness to share his knowledge with others have advanced the understanding of earthquakes and earthquake monitoring technology worldwide.

Mr. Galetzka began his career with the USGS through a National Association of Geoscience Teachers summer position. During his employment with USGS, Mr. Galetzka was responsible for innovating and installing a network of continuously operating Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers throughout southern California. He then worked at the California Institute of Technology to install similar networks worldwide, including Sumatra, Taiwan, Chile, and Tibet and, most recently, in Mexico as TLALOCnet Project Manager for UNAVCO (a non-profit university-governed consortium that facilitates geoscience research and education using geodesy). While in Nepal to find suitable locations and install a network of stations, Mr. Galetzka also worked with the U.S. Embassy and other organizations to increase the region's preparedness for earthquakes, especially in Kathmandu. He also trained Nepali scientists on field craft for installing GPS stations and engaged local citizens in understanding earthquakes and related hazards while in the course of performing his extensive and exceedingly strenuous field work. During the two months after the Gorkha, Nepal M 7.8 earthquake of 2015, while bringing aid supplies to the many severely impacted villages where the monitoring equipment stations were located, Mr. Galetzka also performed a set of complex and demanding tasks including the retrieval of crucial data that would otherwise have been lost. These mountainous and very remote outlying regions had been heavily impacted and cut off from utilities and supplies, so the relief support Mr. Galetzka provided, as well as his previous efforts to educate the communities about earthquake hazards, including "drop, cover and hold on" drills, certainly significantly reduced human suffering and very probably saved lives. For his support of the mission of the USGS Earthquake Hazards Program and more broadly for his efforts to reduce the threat of earthquakes worldwide, and for his special actions including key data collection activities following the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, Mr. John Galetzka is granted the John Wesley Powell Award of the U.S. Geological Survey.

Suzette M. Kimball
Director